

***The Travelling of Imagery:  
A Cognitive Analysis of the Meter of Two Medieval Colophons***

The idea that we have of manuscript production in Byzantine times is a very static one, of monks quietly copying texts, safely sealed away in their monasteries. However, two popular scribal colophons (the *ὥσπερ ξένοι χαίρουσιν* and the *ἡ χεὶρ μὲν ἡ γράψασα* type) prove this image to be quite wrong. For one thing, scribes did not just quietly copy these colophons, but they made their own versions of it, adding and omitting as they pleased. Moreover, both formulas are attested in almost the exact same form in Arabic, Syriac and Aramaic manuscripts, which suggests a monastic culture that thoroughly interacted with the east.

So what was it exactly that made these two colophons so popular, across the boundaries of language and culture? Their numerous occurrences have been collected in the Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams, a project hosted by Ghent University (freely available at [www.dbbe.ugent.be](http://www.dbbe.ugent.be)). There are over 100 versions of these book epigrams in the database, which is no doubt only a glimpse of their original scope and which does not even include their Arabic, Syriac and Aramaic versions.

In this paper, a metrical analysis of the Greek versions of the *ὥσπερ ξένοι χαίρουσιν* and *ἡ χεὶρ μὲν ἡ γράψασα* colophons will provide deeper insight into the cognitive patterns behind the two colophons and the way scribes used and especially reused them. Is it possible that their metrical structure made them so cognitively manageable that these similes were enabled to easily travel across the boundaries of language?